

Managing and acquitting your grant

How-to guide

This How-to guide is one of a series produced by the Office of Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi, to help constituents find and apply for grants.

The topics in this series are:

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The full series is available at <https://www.helenhaines.org/resources/grants>. On this website you'll also find six short videos to help you through the grant process.

Managing and acquitting grants

Acquitting a grant means completing the project or meeting milestones and accurately reporting on the funded activities and expenditure of funding you have received. Acquittal is a formal condition of funding.

This How-to Guide is designed to help you set up systems and record-keeping that will help you fulfil the obligations you have as a grant winner.

“Your report helps us to find out how the grant went and understand what difference it has made. It provides a useful prompt for you to get feedback on, and analyse and understand the impact of your work, and gives you an opportunity to reflect on what you learned.”

Extract from an Australian grant maker's website¹

Key points

- Grant programs vary, and so do the reporting requirements for each grant. When you are notified of the success of your grant application, you will be required to complete an agreement detailing the process of spending the funding, and obligations to report on the outcomes and completion of your project. Much of this information will come from your application – e.g. your project objectives, key outcomes (i.e. what you are trying to achieve), and your budget.
- Grant projects often have set deadlines for completion and expenditure of funding.
- Grant reports may be required on completion of your project, or sometimes at agreed milestones – either project milestones, or other regular reporting intervals.
- Most grant makers will ask for evidence of the funded activities, an assessment of the project targets or objectives, the outcomes achieved, and financial information. Some grant makers will ask you to detail challenges and reflect on what you have learnt.

Setting up systems

- **Read the funding agreement** thoroughly and note the reporting requirements and deadlines for reporting. Nominate a person responsible for gathering information and preparing reports.
- Note **what the grant maker is asking for** – e.g. financial reporting, numbers of people at events, evidence of work completed.
- **Set up a record-keeping and reporting system** to ensure that the data you are collecting matches the grant agreement and project objectives. You will be required to report on financial expenditure against your agreed budget.

¹ www.hmstrust.org.au/grantees/managing-reporting-grant

- Consider using **other measures or reporting tools**, such as photos, numbers of people involved, evidence of project milestones being met, volunteer hours on the project, evidence that the outcomes were achieved, and evidence of collaboration with other organisations.
- **Be specific in your data gathering** so that your report can be accurate and concise. For example, if one of your annual milestones is to 'provide interactive education with young people in sports clubs', you might measure how many education sessions were provided, how many young people were involved, and what ages they were. You can then be very specific in your reporting – e.g. 20 education sessions were provided to 365 participants aged 15-21 years.
- **Set up systems** to gather evidence that your project is meeting its objectives and making a difference. For example, workshop attendance sheets, regular photos of building activity progress, testimonials from project beneficiaries. Gather this information at the start of the project and at regular intervals to demonstrate what changes may have occurred.
- **Set up financial reporting systems** so that you can identify and separately report the direct income and direct expenditure associated with your specific grant.
- **Establish a baseline** – your numbers or measures before the funding, and what are they after the funding. For example, the number of people using your service before the funding and during the grant funding period.
- Have **regular internal meetings** to report on the progress using the measures set up within your grant. Use this team as an effective sounding board helping to identify and manage project risks (i.e. not meeting agreed milestones) and how to increase the impact of your project.
- **Grant management and reporting systems must be well understood** in your organisation. All relevant information (e.g. the source of the information, where it is located, and how it is monitored) must be documented, in case the person managing the project moves on before the project is completed.

Remember

- Funding agreements are **contracts** and can be legally binding. Manage your records well, report on time, and provide sound information that demonstrates what is happening with the project.
- **Keep open communication** with your grant maker. If circumstances change in a way that may affect the delivery of your project, let them know early and develop a solution together.
- **Your track record** in managing and acquitting grants may be considered when applying for further grants. Grants that have been improperly managed can disadvantage your future funding applications. Build trust in your organisation by delivering the agreed project and by monitoring and reporting as required.
- **Build in succession.** Volunteers and staff can move on during the delivery of the grant. Make sure it is easy to find details of your commitments and key deadlines and reporting requirements.

For more information

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